

## Montana Wheat & Barley Committee

### History:

At the request of Montana producers in 2009, a new wheat and barley assessment was established at .02 cents/bushel on wheat and .03 cents/hundred weight on barley. **This self-assessment was originally established in 1967 to fund marketing, research, and education projects that specifically benefit Montana producers.** A Governor appointed board of directors establishes the budget and direction of assessment funding. The Montana Wheat & Barley Committee (MW&BC) Directors polled producers across the state and determined that additional assessment funds should be awarded to marketing, promotion and research efforts. Less than 2% of producers request a refund on their assessment because most recognize the enormous benefits of these assessment funds to the production and marketing of Montana grains. The MW&BC is attached to the Department of Agriculture for administrative purposes only.

### Current:

**In the last couple years, we have witnessed an increase in production across the state which has also then increased the amount of revenue collected by the Montana Wheat and Barley Committee.** This increase has been due to efficient production methods, weather conditions and a release of CRP acres. USDA has released approximately 1 million acres into state production which has and will continue to increase wheat, barley, and other crops produced in Montana.

**Recent federal cutbacks in foreign market development and agricultural research have greatly affected Montana.** Producers recognize that it is the international promotion and improved research that brings in more income to the farm and ultimately to the State of Montana. **In order to maintain our efforts with overseas buyers and new market development, we will need to find ways to fund foreign promotion.** Montana ships 80% of our wheat to foreign markets so these promotional activities are essential.

Additionally, research gives us new varieties and production methods that improve yield and quality. It is Montana Wheat & Barley Committee funding that is the driving force behind many agriculture research projects. **With an increase in funding from the Committee, we may be able to assist with essential research projects that have been hurt by federal cuts.**

Last year, Montana produced over 180 million bushels of wheat and 40 million bushels of barley. **This is approximately a \$1.75 billion industry that benefits the state.** Any funding that promotes and improves wheat and barley proves to have a significant impact on our economy.

### Summary:

**MW&BC has additional revenue but requires the spending authority to meet the needs of Montana producers.** These are self-assessed funds that are not combined with any state general funds and need to be spent on essential producer programs.